
# Guest editorial



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# Guest editorial





## Guest editorial for NOFOMA 2020 conference special issue

The 32nd annual conference of the Nordic Society of Logistics researchers, NOFOMA2020, was originally planned and organized by the University of Iceland, Faculty of Industrial Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Computer Science, and should have taken place early June that year. As the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outburst became a reality and conferences, one by one, were postponed, similar destiny became the fate for NOFOMA2020, first by postponing until early September, but in the end bringing the conference to a virtual one instead of on-site in Reykjavik, Iceland.

The theme of the conference was "Operational excellence through logistics resilience". It was chosen since Iceland came into the spotlight little less than ten years ago as the volcano Eyjafjallajökull made it latest outburst resulting in serious challenges in transportation and logistics operations in Europe and in the end affected the whole worlds' supply chains. The irony of the whole situation is this year outburst of COVID-19 has brought to the society similar logistical problems in addition to the horrifying health problems and losses of lives, a lot worse than the damages the volcano erection caused. Logistics operations are importance in such times and can bring the support needed for society through humanitarian work. A better knowledge on resilient logistics operations is required to provide supports and secure supplies to both citizens and industries to continue operating and living as needed despite serious occurrences.

Given the fact that the conference was going to be a virtual one, not really in charge of a specific academic organization, as is the tradition, the NOFOMA Board decided to take over part of the organization of the conference and prepared the online conference that took place on September 17–18, 2020. The review process for the conference and preparation of the proceedings was carried out by the University of Iceland, as it was already midway when the decision was taken to go online. The Board however took over the role of the scientific committee deciding on which papers to invite for this special issue, organization of the process and the support to the authors in their endeavour of preparing the papers for the final acceptance for the special issue.

Initially, 120 abstracts were submitted to the conference. At the deadline for revised full papers and work-in-progress papers, 60 full papers had been accepted for the conference proceedings, but due to the format of the conference, few work-in-progress papers were in the end presented. All full papers did go through a double-blind peer review process by around 70 reviewers which the NOFOMA society pays its great gratitude to.

Out of the 60 full papers, seven were initially invited to improve their manuscript one step further and submit their paper for a new double-blind peer review process. At the end, five of the seven did make it all the way for publication in this International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management NOFOMA2020 special issue. Special thanks go to the editor-in-chief and the editorial team of IJPDLM for the continued collaboration and support.

We are proud to present five papers from the NOFOMA2020 conference in this special issue. The first paper deals with the first steps in the supply chain, namely the sourcing process and analytical capabilities in decision-making related to that important process titled "A knowledge-based view of analytics capability in purchasing and supply management," where the study object is to explore how analytics capabilities develop within the purchasing and supply management (PSM) function of six different organizations. The authors are a cross-Nordic team from Sweden and Finland: Mikael Öhman, Ala Arvidsson, Patrik Jonsson, and Riikka Kaipia. They highlighted the importance of the user-driven side of analytic

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development. Two distinct phases are identified: justification and then cross-functional initiatives analytics. Analytics take dual roles in cross-functional initiatives: integration and communication. Analytics initiatives help integrate PSM knowledge and other functional knowledge with analytical knowledge. Analytics also take a communication role to share mutual insights. These roles depend on the redundancy or overlap of the functional knowledge base. These findings stimulate future research to better understand how analytics change the ways firms work with knowledge.

From the sourcing field of supply management, the next three papers advance in broad sense the reverse logistics literature including recycling, reverse flows and circularity.

The second paper examines whether adaptations in reverse logistics systems can improve end consumer recycling behaviour. A framework with three propositions is developed and evaluated empirically in the paper "The power of nudging: how adaptations in reverse logistics systems can improve end-consumer recycling behavior". The authors are Bente Flygansvær, Asta Gjetø Samuelsen and Rebecka Våge Støyle from Norway. Based on quasi-experiments of households in Oslo, the paper shows interventions such as the social norm nudge (information about positive recycling action), distance nudge (convenient distance to collection point), and availability nudge (availability of sorting equipment) can improve recycling behaviour. Since many companies aim to reduce the use of virgin materials, this study serves as a platform to better understand end-consumer-turned-suppliers (ECTS), who are crucial for achieving the European Union's Green Deals and circular economy goal.

The third paper continues a similar note dealing with reverse supply chains of post-use textile where barriers and drivers for establishing partnerships are explored. The study is conducted using a single case study on non-profit organizations (NPOs) in the reverse textile supply chains. The paper "Emerging partnerships between non-profit organizations and companies in reverse supply chains: enabling valorization of post-use textile" is authored by Anna Zhuravleva and Anna Aminoff from Finland. The study adds important understanding of barriers and drivers that affect partnership among NPOs, waste management companies and donors. The roles of NPOs have evolved from charity and social work to partnership with companies since they become the dominant collectors of post-use textiles. These insights are useful for textile and clothing companies who want to work with NPOs. Without such effective partnerships, it would be difficult for the European Union member states to meet the obligation to implement separate collection of textile waste by 2025.

The fourth paper investigates how resource flows can be slowed down to prolong the product in-use phase. The paper identifies logistical flows and trade-offs for enhanced circularity using a multiple case study design and abductive reasoning through 13 product-service cases in the aftermarket service sector. Logistics services supporting slowing of materials and resource flows in three major reverse cycles of aftermarket supply chains are identified: repair and maintenance, reuse and redistribution, and refurbish and remanufacturing. The paper titled "Enhanced circularity in aftermarkets: logistics tradeoffs" is authored by Gabriella Gatenholm, Árni Halldórsson and Jenny Bäckstrand. While traditional logistics trade-off is between material and information flow, this paper reveals three additional trade-offs: material–people, people–knowledge and information–knowledge flows. Further understanding of these trade-offs can potentially help develop solutions to support the "right to repair" regulations and Green (New) Deals debated in the European Union and the USA.

The fifth and final paper takes a broader view and explores why some companies can achieve collaborative advantage and others cannot. The paper explores how managerial commitment enables collaborative capabilities using a longitudinal inductive study. The paper identifies managerial commitment as a super-ordinate enabler. The paper

"Overcoming the collaborative challenge: commitment as a super-ordinate enabler of value co-creation" is authored by Stanley E. Fawcett, Amydee M. Fawcett, August Michel Knemeyer, Sebastian Brockhaus and G. Scott Webb from Austria and the USA. Based on force field analysis, the paper describes the dynamics of commitment development and explores three types of commitment: instrumental, normative and transformative. The paper suggests some interesting perspectives to understand collaboration dynamics. Collaboration can be viewed as an evolutionary capability that can evolve through two forms: gradualism and punctuated equilibrium. The paper proposes a framework to understand the emergence of transformative commitment to collaboration through two loops: reinforcing loop and balancing loop. While commitment is reinforced by the perception of the roles of supply chain relationships, there is also a need to proactively intervene to alter the balance between drivers and resistors.

The included papers give a good indication of, not only the variety of topics dealt with by the NOFOMA society, but also the quality it brings about due to its research implications and industry through its research and managerial impacts, something that we as a research society are immensely proud of. More importantly, these papers serve as a platform to advance logistics and supply chain management knowledge and address societal challenges.

Hope you will enjoy this International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management NOFOMA2020 special issue.

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